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USSR Weekly Review

16 March 1978

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This publication is prepared by the USSR Division, Office of Regional and Political Analysis, with occasional contributions from other offices within the National Foreign Assessment Center. The views presented are the personal judgments of analysts on significant events or trends in Soviet foreign and domestic affairs. Although the analysis centers on political matters, it discusses politically relevant economic or strategic trends when appropriate. Differences of opinion are sometimes aired to present consumers with a range of analytical views. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles or to

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USSR-Japan: More Rancor Over Disputed Islands

A high-ranking Soviet diplomat in Tokyo has remarked that the USSR might be willing to give up two of the four Soviet-held, Japanese-claimed islands in the southern Kuriles upon the conclusion of a bilateral "good neighbor" treaty. This is the first time since 1973 that the Soviets have even hinted at some flexibility on the longstanding territorial dispute. The timing and context of those remarks, as well as subsequent Soviet statements, indicate, however, that this was not a serious offer but a ruse designed to produce movement on the treaty. If so, the ploy not only failed, it may--by bringing the acrimonious northern territories issue once again to the forefront of Soviet-Japanese relations--have been counterproductive.

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There can be little doubt about the sincerity of a Soviet desire for a "good neighbor" type agreement with Japan, mainly because it would serve as a counterweight to a proposed Sino-Japanese "peace and friendship" treaty that contains an "antihegemony" clause directed at the Soviet Union. Any suggestion to discuss the territorial issue--something Moscow has adamantly refused to do--would seem to be a logical move to elicit Japanese support for a good neighbor accord, particularly since Tokyo insists that no political

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agreements will be signed unless the two sides agree first to resolve the dispute.

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Another Case of Soviet Duplicity

[redacted] is not the first time the Soviets have attempted to deceive the Japanese with hints of compromise on the islands in order to achieve a larger diplomatic objective. Anxious to create an atmosphere of improved relations, Brezhnev agreed in October 1973 to a joint statement at the conclusion of his summit meeting with former Prime Minister Tanaka that referred to "matters left over since the time of the Second World War"--a euphemism for the

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territorial dispute. Inclusion of this phrase marked formal and public confirmation of Soviet willingness to consider alterations in the postwar status quo and was viewed as a symbolic victory by the Japanese. In addition, during their private talks Brezhnev reportedly told Tanaka that the USSR was prepared "to give the dragon two eyes," an apparent allusion to Habomai and Shikotan Islands.

Subsequently, however, the Soviets denied that interpretation of the joint statement, strongly reasserting their unyielding position that the territorial issue had been settled by the results of the war and postwar agreements. They have continued to do so

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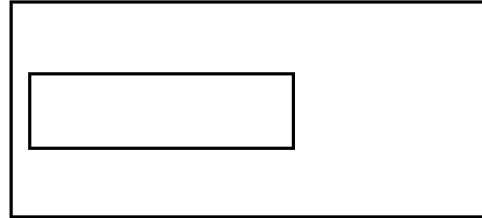
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Soviet Ambassador to Zambia: A Profile

Vasiliy G. Solodovnikov has probably played an important role in the articulation if not formation of Soviet African policy over the last 15 years. Trained in the 1930s as an economist, Solodovnikov joined the prestigious Institute of World Economic and International Relations (IMEMO) as a professor in 1954. When he left IMEMO in 1961, Solodovnikov was a deputy director of the Institute. In the early 1960s he served at the UN with the Soviet mission.

In 1964, Solodovnikov was appointed director of the Soviet Academy of Sciences African Institute, a post now held by Foreign Minister Gromyko's son. Solodovnikov's appointment coincided with Khrushchev's removal, and within a year the Institute adopted a more conservative approach and concentrated on giving closer support to Moscow's political, economic, and cultural offensive in Africa.

Solodovnikov's 12-year tenure as director of the African Institute is probably an indication that his work there met with the Kremlin's favor. Although he interprets African affairs through a distinct ideological prism, his analysis--by Soviet standards--has been relatively sophisticated and realistic. US Embassy officials who met Solodovnikov in Moscow saw him as more an administrator and political animal than an academic. For the most part, he has managed to stay in the mainstream of Soviet policy.

In October 1970, Solodovnikov appeared as editor of a collection of articles that criticized previous Soviet analysis on Africa and called for a more sophisticated and aggressive policy toward the continent as a whole.

The attention the book received in the Western press stimulated a vituperative column in *Izvestiya* on 19 March 1971. *Izvestiya* accused the "enemies of the new Africa"

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of using all possible means to cast a shadow on the Soviet Union's policies toward its friends in Africa and the Middle East. In a later conversation with US Embassy officials in November 1970, Solodovnikov argued that the national liberation movements in Africa were becoming increasingly radical and creating new opportunities for the USSR. Three months later, Kosygin called for a more lasting Soviet presence in the Third World based on growing economic and political ties.

In 1976, Solodovnikov was appointed Ambassador to Zambia. His promotion came as the Soviets, flushed with victory in Angola, began to expand and accelerate their activities in southern Africa. For some time, Zambia has been the center of Soviet operations against Rhodesia because ZAPU--Moscow's only real client in the Patriotic Front--was based there. Solodovnikov has always insisted that the situation in southern Africa was different from the rest of the continent. In the rest of Africa, the liberation struggle was basically anticolonial; in the south it has always been more a black-white civil war. Shortly before his appointment as ambassador, Solodovnikov wrote an article emphasizing that there were "still great unused opportunities to further strengthen friendship and cooperation between the USSR and the African states."

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